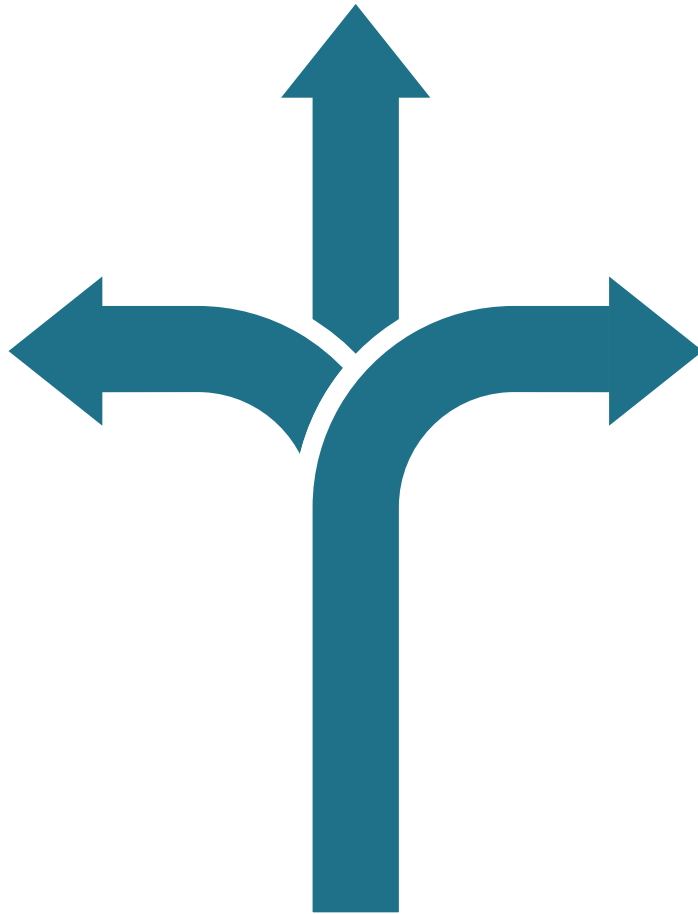


CONSIDER



BIBLICAL TEACHINGS THAT FOSTER SPIRITUAL GROWTH
BY PR. PATRICK MAZANI

Consider: Bible Teachings that Foster Spiritual Growth
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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

The study of Scripture is intimately connected with faith and spirituality. God's Word revives, transforms, and restores. God is looking for those who worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23–24), and the study of Scripture is the most important source of truth.

This study is designed to help solidify your faith in God and Scripture as you seek to do His will. Each lesson explores a biblical theme found in one primary biblical passage and supported by others. They start with an overview of the topic, followed by a study of biblical passages, four questions for reflection to help the student apply the content, and a statement of commitment.

As you seek to understand the Bible and apply its teachings to your daily walk with God, consider these guidelines:

I. General Guidelines for Reading the Bible

1. Seek the Holy Spirit's guidance.
2. Immerse yourself in the passage.
3. Pray about and reflect on what you read.
4. Accept and do God's will revealed in Scripture.
5. Share your findings with others.

II. Four Steps to Understand the Bible

The Bible is an ancient, holy text, originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek by authors living at vastly different times and places from our time. As such, the Bible requires careful study to avoid misinterpretation. Below are four steps you can take to fully grasp the Bible's message:

1. Read. Select a passage you would like to learn more about and read it in different translations (e.g., King James Version, New International Version, Good News Translation, etc.).
 - Enhance: Read surrounding verses, chapters, and the entire book to understand the broader context.

2. Study. Research the author, original audience, original language, and historical context. Perform a literary analysis of the passage's context, main words, and ideas.
 - Enhance: Use tools like Bible concordances, dictionaries, and commentaries for a deeper insight. Create your own translation and compare it with others.

3. Interpret (or "exegete") the passage's original meaning and try to explain it in your own words.
 - Enhance: Using a Bible concordance, compare the passage with related passages to find consistent themes.

4. Apply. Explain what the passage means for you today with personal examples and insights.
 - Enhance: Share your understanding with others. Create a short video or post on social media explaining your interpretation of the passage and how you think it applies to you.

LOVE

Love is the essence of God, who loved us even before we existed. In response, we are called to love Him and others. Love is a deliberate action, not just an emotion; it compels us to do good and transforms us to love even the unlovable. It transcends age, culture, and background, bringing meaning and fulfillment. Love is reciprocal, inspiring us to love in return, and is the greatest gift ever given, empowering us to reflect God's character.

What Does the Bible Say?

KEY PASSAGE: 1 CORINTHIANS 13

The Bible teaches that love originated with God; we exist because "God is love" and "He loved us first" (Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 4:8–9). He could have kept the universe for Himself but chose to share it with His creation. When humankind sinned, God demonstrated His love by giving His Son to die in our place so that anyone who "believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).

Read 1 John 3:1; 4:8 and Revelation 3:19 to understand God's love.

Jesus is the greatest expression of God's love, not only because of how He lived but because He gave His life for us (John 15:13). Jesus' death is the ultimate act of love. We are in Christ, and nothing can separate us from God's love (Romans 8:35–39).

Love for God and neighbor summarizes the Ten Commandments (Matthew 22:36–40). All who love God, keep His commandments (John 14:15).

Study what 1 Corinthians 13 and John 13:34–35 teach about love.

The Bible also shows that love is practical and transformative. Our ability to love reflects God's image in us (Genesis 1:27). God's love for us calls us to love others; we cannot love God if we fail to love others, even our enemies (Matthew 5:43–46; 1 John 4:7–12, 20–21).

Study Galatians 5:22–26 to learn how God's love works in us to produce spiritual growth and transformation.

Questions for Reflection

1. How does knowing that “God is love” impact your faith and relationships?
2. What can Christ’s sacrifice teach you about the depth of God’s love?
3. How can you practically demonstrate God’s love to others?
4. How does God’s love sustain you through challenges and suffering?

My Commitment

I will embrace God’s love as the foundation of my life, allowing it to transform my heart and actions. By His grace, I will love others selflessly, reflect His character, and share His love with a broken world.

PRAYER

Prayer is the act of communicating with God. When we pray, we praise Him for His greatness, express gratitude for His blessings, confess sins to seek forgiveness, and present our requests to Him. It can be performed individually or in group, silently or audibly. Praying is a sign of humility and recognition of our need for God. God listens attentively and values sincerity. Prayer also includes interceding for others. Prayer is the heartbeat of faith.

What Does the Bible Say?

KEY PASSAGE: MATTHEW 6:5–13

Before sin, God communicated face to face with Adam and Eve, but that privilege was lost when they sinned and were banned from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8, 24). Despite our sinful condition, we can still communicate with God through prayer. Prayer is a continuous mental state that strengthens and renews the believer's spirit (Psalm 5:2–3; Isaiah 40:29–31). Prayer is not limited to certain times or places—we can pray anytime, anywhere.

Explore prayer in Psalm 55:17; Jonah 2:1–2; Luke 6:12; Acts 1:14; 16:25; 1 Ephesians 6:18; Thessalonians 5:17; Philippians 4:6, and Colossians 4:2.

In Matthew 6:5–13, Jesus teaches that prayer is personal communion with God, who knows our needs before we ask. In His model prayer, commonly known as the Lord's Prayer, He highlights key elements of effective prayer: reverence for God, alignment with His will, dependence on Him for daily provision, confession of sins, forgiveness of others, and deliverance from evil.

Read the following passages to learn what Jesus taught about prayer: Matthew 5:23–24, 44; 6:5–15; 7:7; 9:37–38; 17:21; Mark 11:24–26; Luke 10:2; 11:1; 18:1; 22:40, 46; John 17.

God hears us when we pray on behalf of others. Praying for others fosters reconciliation, and we are called to intercede even for our enemies. Intercession is a vital expression of love and compassion through prayer.

Study the following passages on intercessory prayer: 1 Samuel 12:19, 23; Job 42:10; John 17; Acts 12:5; 2 Corinthians 13:7; Colossians 1:9; James 5:16; 1 Timothy 2:1.

Confessing sin is a crucial part of prayer. If we knowingly harbor unconfessed sin and disobedience, our prayer is ineffective (Psalm 66:18–20). Jesus taught that we must pray continually, sincerely, and with faith. The Holy Spirit aids us in prayer, guiding us in times of weakness and equips us to overcome temptation.

Explore prayer in the following passages: Proverbs 15:8; 28:9; Daniel 9:4–9; Romans 8:26; James 1:5; 5:16–20.

Questions for Reflection

1. How does setting aside regular times for prayer deepen your relationship with God?
2. What does Jesus' example of prayer teach us about perseverance and trust in God?
3. How can interceding for others strengthen your faith and bless your community?
4. How can confessing sins and seeking forgiveness in prayer bring you peace and restoration?

My Commitment

I pray to God sincerely, seeking His guidance and presence. My prayers will reflect gratitude and reverence, knowing God listens and rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

FAITH

Faith—the act of trusting and believing—thrives on God’s promises; when we exercise faith, it gets stronger. God invites us to trust Him and accept His perfect will for us. Believing is a condition for receiving God’s gifts. Faith is contagious; you can influence others to have greater faith. Faith lives in a pure heart that trusts and hopes in God alone.

What Does the Bible Say?

KEY PASSAGE: HEBREWS 11

Hebrews 11 is the “hall of fame” of great men and women of faith in Scripture. Figures like Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, and others believed in God’s promises, even when the fulfillment was unseen or distant: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (11:1). Their faith was not just intellectual belief but active reliance on God. Without faith, it is impossible to approach Him. Faith is key to enduring trials and obtaining God’s promises.

Read Hebrews 11 and highlight the characters that stand out.

“The just shall live by his faith,” wrote prophet Habakkuk (2:4; Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:38), and Paul wrote that believers “walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus challenged His followers to not be afraid but have faith (Mark 4:40; 11:22–24). Even a small measure of faith can accomplish great things (Luke 17:5–6; Matthew 8:10, 9:2, 22, 29). Faith in Jesus’ name had the power to heal disease (John 4:46–54; Acts 3:16). Faith will be under attack in the end times (Luke 18:8; Revelation 3:20).

Explore how Jesus dwells in our hearts through faith in Ephesians 3:17; Galatians 2:20; 1 John 5:4–5.

Practical faith connects us to God, guiding and sustaining us in every aspect of life. Faith without the accompanying fruits has no power (James 2:14–20). Faith is an essential qualification for serving the Lord (Acts 6:5, 8; 11:24).

Explore how faith can be a weapon in trying times in these passages: Acts 14:22; Ephesians 6:16, 23; Philippians 1:27–30; Colossians 1:21–23; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; 1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrews 10:22–2; 1 Peter 5:9.

Faith is personal and essential to our relationship with God (Galatians 3:22–26; Ephesians 2:8; 4:5; Hebrews 11:6). It is a gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9; Jude 3, 20–21). One’s faith must be tested through reflection (2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Timothy 1:19) and grows through hearing God’s Word (Romans 10:17; 16:25–27) and by being faithful in small things (Luke 16:10; Hebrews 11:1). It is especially critical in the end times (1 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 1:5, 7, 9, 21; Revelation 14:12).

Questions for Reflection

1. How did the individuals in Hebrews 11 demonstrate faith in action, and what lessons can we learn from their examples?
2. How does Jesus’ teaching on faith encourage believers to trust God in all circumstances, and what does this teach us about the power of faith?
3. Why is practical faith essential for serving God, and how can it sustain you during trials?
4. What steps can you take to grow your faith and ensure it remains strong in challenging times?

My Commitment

I believe in Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Doubt, fear, and uncertainty will not distract my commitment to Jesus. I cherish and take God at His word by faith.

THE BIBLE

The Bible is often called the “book of books” because of its unique nature and profound influence. It comprises the Old Testament (39 books) and the New Testament (27 books), totaling 66 books written by about 40 authors during approximately 1,500 years. It was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by chosen people. Christians regard the Bible as the word of God.

The Bible has withstood the test of time and remains relevant. Its teachings provide a blueprint for a life of faith, guiding human behavior and character. Living by its principles leads to godliness and a life aligned with God’s will.

What Does the Bible Say?

KEY PASSAGE: 2 TIMOTHY 3:14–15

The Bible is described as divinely inspired and essential for guiding every aspect of life. In 2 Timothy 3:14–15, the Apostle Paul describes the Old Testament as “God-breathed” and profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. The Apostle Peter explained that prophecy never came by human will but through men moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20–21). For example, King David acknowledged the Spirit’s role in his life, stating: “the Spirit of the Lord spoke through me” (2 Samuel 23:2). Likewise, the prophet Ezekiel tells how the Spirit entered him and spoke through him (Ezekiel 2:2; 11:5, 24–25), while the prophet Micah was filled with the Spirit to declare justice and truth (Micah 3:8).

Centuries later, when the writings of the Apostles were organized as the New Testament, the Christian church considered them to be “God-breathed” also. The Bible equips for every good work, making it essential for spiritual growth and moral development. It provides wisdom for salvation through faith in Jesus and serves as the foundation for a life aligned with God’s will.

Explore how God communicated with Ezekiel in chapters 2:2; 11:5, 24–25 and compare with Micah 3:8.

Paul affirmed that the Holy Spirit revealed the gospel (Romans 1:1–2). The Holy Spirit often communicated through dreams and visions and was instrumental in guiding John to record divine revelations (Revelation 1:10–11, 19). Therefore, it is vital to pray daily for the Holy Spirit to help us understand the Scriptures and God’s will.

Read Numbers 12:6 and Joel 2:28–29 to understand how the Holy Spirit inspired the biblical authors.

The Bible acts as a lamp to guide our path (Psalm 119:105). Through faith, the Holy Scriptures shape our destiny and equip us for good works (2 Timothy 3:14–17). The Bible contains saving and sanctifying truths, setting us apart for God’s purposes. As Jesus prayed: “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17; see also Leviticus 20:8; Exodus 31:13). The power of the written word enables us to overcome temptation, as Jesus demonstrated in resisting Satan using Scripture (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; Psalm 119:9). The Word of God transforms us and molds our character for His glory.

Explore Scripture’s purpose in relation to Jesus Christ in Matthew 2:4–6; 21:4–5; Luke 1:1–4; 24:44; John 5:39; 20:31; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Galatians 3:16.

When faced with challenging circumstances, we are called to seek wisdom in Scripture, which is the standard of truth (Isaiah 8:20; Acts 5:29; Galatians 1:8). While the Bible does not reveal everything about God, it provides what is necessary for our faith and understanding (Deuteronomy 29:29). The Bible has the power to transform lives: “For the word of God is living and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19; Psalm 19:7–14). Following the example of the Christians in Berea, we should study Scripture daily to affirm the truth and grow in faith (Acts 17:11; Malachi 3:16–18).

Explore the importance of considering all Scripture relevant for spiritual growth in Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5–6; Isaiah 40:8.

Questions for Reflection

1. How does understanding the Bible as divinely inspired influence how you approach and apply its teachings?
2. How can you rely on the Holy Spirit to help you understand and live out the truths of Scripture?
3. How can the Bible guide you in overcoming challenges and making decisions that align with God’s will?
4. What steps can you take to make Scripture a daily source of strength, guidance, and transformation?

My Commitment

I believe that the Bible is God’s holy Word and I commit to living according to the light I receive from it.